

the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam war.

After leaving Active-Duty service, Tony moved to Jacksonville, Florida, where he lives today and serves as the president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Local Chapter 1046. Through this leadership role, Tony has remained active in advocating for his fellow veterans suffering from service-related illnesses. His continued commitment to the veterans of Northeast Florida and dedication to the Nation are unmatched.

I take this opportunity to thank Tony for his continued efforts to support those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom and salute his service to this Nation. We owe Tony and veterans like him a debt of gratitude that we could never repay.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF JOHN LESLIE

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate retired Navy Commander John Leslie for his induction into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.

John spent a total of 39 years in active service and civilian service to the U.S. Navy, where he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, three Meritorious Service Medals, seven Strike/Flight Air Medals, two Navy Commendation Medals, and numerous other service and unit decorations.

He is known by his friends and neighbors as an honorable officer, a devoted friend, a true patriot, and a loving husband to his wife, Patricia, who you see pictured here.

John's commitment to supporting those around him has continued into retirement through his service to his fellow veterans across Northeast Florida. He now devotes his time to leadership and volunteer roles at the Mayo Clinic, Community Hospice and Palliative Care, and Veterans Treatment Court in St. Johns County. John's legacy of dedication rightfully earned him a spot in the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame.

On behalf of Florida's Fourth Congressional District, I thank Commander Leslie for his devotion to our Nation.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY COMMISSIONER PAUL WALDRON

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember St. Johns County Commissioner Paul Waldron.

Paul was a lifelong resident of St. Johns County and a vibrant member of the community. Throughout his young life, Paul worked and operated his family's small business, Harry's Curb Market, before becoming a respected real estate professional.

Paul applied his experience running a small business to his role as St. Johns County commissioner through his efforts to support and expand recreation and tourism development and strengthen our economy.

Throughout his 6 years as commissioner, Paul also became a powerful advocate for residents in St. Johns County and continued to volunteer in a variety of capacities throughout the community.

His recent loss is a devastating blow to our community. He will be remembered as a strong leader, faithful husband, loving father, and beloved neighbor and friend. I was proud to call him my friend.

On behalf of Florida's Fourth Congressional District, I extend sincere condolences to Paul's wife, Stephanie, and their two daughters, Ashley and Kati.

HONORING THE LIFE OF TYRONE WINFREY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Tyrone Winfrey, a beloved resident of Michigan's 13th Congressional District. He was a tireless advocate for our students, a fighter for higher education opportunities, and so much more.

Tyrone Winfrey served as the Executive Director of Community Affairs for Detroit Public Schools Community District and was the former school board president. He worked tirelessly to advocate for our youth, and to ensure that every single student had access and an opportunity to quality education and a pathway for college and higher education opportunities.

Tyrone served our communities at Detroit public schools for almost 35 years, and during his time, he inspired, supported, and uplifted so many of our students and families.

He lost his 5-year battle with cancer, and I am proud to stand here in honor of his life and his love for our community and our youth. My thoughts and prayers are with his family, the Detroit Public Schools Community District, and all who were impacted by Tyrone Winfrey.

RECOGNIZING THE ISLAMIC CENTER OF AMERICA

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Islamic Center of America for their outstanding service on behalf of our communities of Wayne County and Southeastern Michigan as they celebrate their 60th anniversary.

They were founded in 1962, and there, the Islamic Center of America's roots can be traced back to 1949 when our religious leader, scholar, Imam Chirri, who could not speak or understand English, came to America at the request of a small group of residents.

A committed group of community members came together and worked to establish the Islamic Center as Michigan's first mosque and invited Imam Chirri to lead this family in faith.

Since its humbling beginnings, the Islamic Center of America has grown to accommodate its growing family in faith and offers numerous community programs, including education and senior services. They are a pillar of cross-cultural understanding in one of our area's most vibrant and diverse communities.

Please join me in recognizing the Islamic Center of America as they celebrate 60 years of faith and service.

IN MEMORY OF JOEY SMITH

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my sadness about the death of Joey Smith, a 12-year-old resident of Dearborn Heights, whose young life was tragically cut short when he was struck by a car.

A seventh-grade student at O.W. Best Middle School, Joey was always surrounded by friends and classmates who will dearly miss him. He will be remembered for his bright smile.

I offer my deepest condolences and sympathy to Joey's family and his friends as they mourn his loss.

As a mother myself, my heart especially goes out to Joey's mother, Katie. I pray that she finds the strength and peace during this very difficult time of unimaginable grief. Our community is deeply saddened by this tragedy.

Please join me in honoring the memory of Joey Smith.

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, this week we celebrate the eighth annual National Apprenticeship Week. It is the perfect time to reflect on what is and what isn't working in our Nation's workforce development programs.

There are more than 10 million unfilled jobs in this country and nearly 6 million unemployed individuals. There is clearly a crack in the education-to-workforce pipeline.

The best way to address our country's skills gap and worker shortage is to promote workforce development programs that actually work.

I have been encouraged to see many businesses coming up with their own workforce development programs. Time and again, employer-led programs prove to produce the best results.

More industries are embracing apprenticeships as a solution for upskilling and re-skilling workers. As employers realize that baccalaureate degrees do not always prepare workers to fill needed roles, more alternative pathways will be needed.

Many businesses are already removing unnecessary degree requirements and are, instead, replacing them with apprenticeship programs. This is a great development for our country and our workforce.

Americans should not have to take out mountains of crushing student loan debt to study a subject that has nothing to do with their intended career, only to have to start from scratch once they enter the workforce.

For too long, the college-for-all mentality has pushed young people into obtaining a baccalaureate degree, regardless of their intended career. This mentality is slowly shifting, and our country will be better off for it.

Now that more young people are turning to apprenticeships, it is important to ensure that there are high-quality programs available.